

## **Kentucky Department of Revenue Caught Up on Tax Refund Backlog; Implements Longer Call Center Hours Beginning Today**

*Processing of error free e-filed returns now estimated at 14 days*

**FRANKFORT, Ky.** – The Department of Revenue is currently caught up processing the backlog of tax refund requests and has implemented longer call center hours to assist taxpayers.

The slowdown was attributed to increased identity theft and fraudulent claims, which caused the department to put in additional security features in light of recent high profile data breaches.

To date, the department has received nearly 800,000 returns of which almost 700,000 have been processed. This includes more than 580,000 refunds totaling \$197 million. The overall volume of tax returns received is slightly ahead of this time last year.

“The department is processing refunds as expeditiously as possible given the strong internal controls and fraud detection processes we have implemented,” said Dan Bork, commissioner of the Department of Revenue. “I just want to reiterate that we are focused on processing returns as quickly as possible while having measures in place to protect taxpayers from identity theft and the Commonwealth from tax fraud.”

Going forward, the department anticipates that taxpayers will receive refunds from electronically filed, error free returns within 14 days. Taxpayers whose returns are filed with errors or abnormalities will take longer to receive their refunds as do paper filed returns.

Starting today, the department has extended its telephone hours for taxpayer assistance. Taxpayers can call 502-564-4581 between the hours of 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. eastern time Monday through Friday for help with their individual income tax return. Call center hours will return to normal on April 19.

In January the department answered 9,042 calls in the individual income tax section. For February, the department has answered 34,970 calls which average out to 1,748 calls per day.

### **Protect Yourself from Tax-Related Identity Theft**

The department reminds taxpayers to protect their personal information and actively monitor their credit reports, charge cards and bank accounts for any suspicious activity.

Tax-related identity theft occurs when someone uses another person’s stolen Social Security number (SSN) to file a tax return claiming a fraudulent refund. Taxpayers may be unaware that this has happened until they file their return and discover that a return already has been filed using their SSN. Or the taxpayer may receive a letter from DOR or the IRS saying a suspicious return has been filed using their SSN.

### **Know the warning signs**

Be alert to possible tax-related identity theft if you are contacted by DOR or the IRS about:

- More than one tax return that was filed for you,

- You owe additional tax, have a refund offset or have had collection actions taken against you for a year you did not file a tax return, or
- IRS or DOR records indicate you received wages or other income from an employer for whom you did not work.

For more information and resources related to identity theft, visit the Federal Trade Commission's IdentityTheft.gov website.

To contact the Kentucky Department of Revenue, call the taxpayer assistance line at 502-564-4581 or email [individualincometax@ky.gov](mailto:individualincometax@ky.gov).